

THE ARCH AND THE STATUE AGAIN.

APOLLO and the Nine be praised! the statue, it appears, is positively to come down. Few questions in matters of art have agitated the public so much, and so long, as the impropriety of the present conjunction, and if we may judge from the pile of communications on the subject, received by us within the last few days, the excitement is far from having subsided.

The course taken by our powerful contemporary, *The Times*, has excited the ire of many of our readers, as it certainly has our own astonishment. But "good Homer sometimes sleeps," why should we wonder at a dose on the part of even the most potent of journals.

The dissent from Academicians, it is reported, were thirty, the approvals two. We are unable, however, to confirm the statement. At the Institute of Architects, the council were unanimous, and in reply to a request to that effect from the Government, forwarded the following

REPORT.

Resolved, That the effect of the equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington on the top of the arch at the entrance to the Green Park, is unsatisfactory, and its position there most objectionable.

The Council, in the first place, deem it proper to observe, that the following opinions are given as those of the Council only, there not being time sufficient to submit the question to a general meeting of the Institute; but a well-grounded impression prevails, that few, if any, dissenting voices would be found among the members, to the judgment of the Council in this matter.

The Council next refer to the strong opinion expressed by the architect who designed the arch, and who has supported his objections with much of sound and excellent reasoning; and they consider it a recognised principle amongst artists, that the architect who designs a successful work is by far the most competent authority upon a question as to the propriety, size, and character, of any sculptural adjuncts or decorations, proposed to be added to his own design.

Independently of the valuable opinion re-

* Sir,—Will you allow me space in your journal for a few remarks in advocacy of the removal of the Wellington Statue, which it appears is now really contemplated by the committee?

If we are to believe *The Times*, who inserts this week two rather flippant letters in vindication of its own lately promulgated encomiums on the combined arch and statue, the public are well satisfied with it. "It is not so much amiss," quoth the editor, who, in his article this morning, assuming higher ground, brands, *ex Cathedra*, R. A.'s and all other "competent persons," whom he is pleased to sneer at, with want of taste, should they dare to gainsay his editorial dictum.

Now, albeit *The Times's* public are very well "satisfied" with this testimonial, I must crave your space, Sir, as one of the public, to declare myself totally dissatisfied with it. The two works of art, the arch and the statue (conceding to the latter the propriety of a sideways position) are altogether out of proportion one to the other—more, far more painfully so, than I could have conceived, when the question was first agitated. That the public, as a body, are satisfied with it, I deny; for who recognises in the statue the colossal work it really is? Nay, few persons, now that it has been hoisted on "that had eminence," are found to believe that it is twenty-seven feet high, and that a mounted life guardman may ride under the belly of the horse. How few recognise, or profess to recognise, in the principal figure the well-known features of our great captain. Somebody—to use the words of a clever critic—"somebody on benches" has got upon the arch. And this, Sir, Editor, with, by the bye, *The Times's* consolatory salvo, that "it is not so much amiss," is all that the public are to gain by the vast outlay that has been incurred.

The Times complains bitterly that the statue, after all this heavy expenditure of scaffolding, dry-horses, ropes, and pulleys, is to come down. But why not, Sir, since all this labour and talent will otherwise have been spent so fruitlessly? Is it not better that the committee should not judiciously retrace their steps than, after having incurred all this cost, and by the very readiness of their testimonial drawn down (if I may say so) the attention of Europe to the combined structure, suffer this monstrous solecism in art to remain for ages?

One word as to the "competent persons," whose opinion *The Times* considers Lord Morpeth unhappy in having sought. Surely *The Times* will allow the term to be applied to the aggregate body of Royal Academicians, backed, as their opinion will doubtless be, by the majority of our most eminent painters, sculptors, and architects without the walls of the Academy! With respect to the alleged delinquency of the "competent persons" in not having, ere this, given utterance to their protest, you, Sir, who have already written so much upon the subject, and have made the same remark, will of course agree. Still I would ask, are not the Earl of Fitzmaurice, as a senator, and Mr. Cockfield, as a professor, "competent persons?" Did not these both write, and to *The Times*, on this topic, long ago? In soe, have not "competent persons" of all kinds bespoken letter on letter, "Once upon Pelion," against the scheme? And yet, despite of all, there it stands at last, statue upon arch—soon, I rejoice to hear, like the French king's twenty thousand men, to "march down again."

Once down, there will be no difficulty whatever in constructing a suitable pedestal for the monument. But, pending that event, I must permit to joining in the general hubbub—down with it.—I am, Sir, &c., W. YOUNG.
London, November 12, 1841.

ferred to, the Council feel that the statue is by far too large for the mass it was intended to decorate, and discordant with that harmony of proportion which is indispensable between the structure and its sculptural embellishments. The size of the arch is apparently diminished by the colossal dimensions of the statue. The elegant screen of columns towards Hyde-park, and indeed all the contiguous buildings are alike affected, and the grandeur and importance of the principal approach to the metropolis is thus lessened, by the false scale produced by the colossal size of the statue.

The most celebrated statues of colossal or heroic size, were all placed with suitable plinths or pedestals on the ground, and not applied as crowning ornaments to buildings. The Jupiter at Ellis, the Minerva at Athens, the Marcus Aurelius in the Roman capitol, and the group on the Quirinal, may be cited among many other ancient statues; and of modern times, the statues in the square and loggia at Florence; of San Carlo Borromeo, at Arona; Peter the Great, at St. Petersburg; and George III., in the Long Walk, at Windsor, may be instanced.

In conclusion, the council feel that if the statue were removed to an approved site, and the arch enriched with appropriate sculptural decoration, under the superintendence of its architect, such decorations being accessory and subordinate, it would then no longer be subject to the severe criticism of artists, foreign visitors, and persons of acknowledged taste."

In acknowledging the receipt of it, Lord Morpeth expressed his gratification in finding, that the opinion of the Institute agreed with that entertained by the Government.

It seems to be generally understood that the statue will be placed in the area opposite the Horse Guards; but nothing certain is yet known. One of our correspondents writes as follows:—

"The Commissioners of her Majesty's Woods and Forests are about to construct a new street from Northumberland House to Whitehall-place, at which last-named point the new Westminster-bridge is to be commenced. I would propose that a suitable pedestal be provided, and that the statue be erected at the junction of the bridge, the street, and the river, where it would form a noble and commanding object from Trafalgar-square and all the bridges."

Sir,—The advocacy of *The Times*, if its self-neutralized articles of the 4th and 14th instant can be so called, for the continuance of the statue where it is, after all the just criticism that paper has offered to the contrary, reminds one of the people who go to Harrogate to drink the rotten-egg waters. At first they exclaim, how filthy! what a horrid taste!—but bearing with this for some weeks, they, becoming accustomed to the nasty stuff, at length observe, "Well! these waters are not so much amiss after all!" just as *The Times* does of the statue. But that will not prevent every fresh mouth being equally disgusted with the nauseous fluid, nor every fresh eye with the vile taste which has placed the statue on the arch, to be the laughing stock of foreigners, and the contempt of men of sound taste in the fine arts of our own country. Can it be allowed to remain there? I had hoped the committee, long before this, would have been convinced of the palpable demerits of its present situation, and the atrocious disproportion of the statue to the arch; but as they either will not, or cannot understand this, I feel compelled, though reluctantly, to reiterate the inquiry made by you, and by *The Times*, do the committee consider it to be in good taste, having formed a statue in honour of a great military hero, to raise it to a place to be always close before his eyes, every time he looks from his window or leaves his house? As *The Times* gives us a precedent for putting an equestrian statue on an arch, in the modern arrangement, that of Marcus Aurelius at Wilton, so, I suppose, we shall have cited as a precedent for this, the Achilles at the immediate rear of the duke's house. Again, do the committee consider it in good taste to place the statue on a pedestal which is so surrounded by buildings, &c., as not to be seen on any side beyond a very few yards from its base? And those who view the statue from Piccadilly,

whence ninety-nine out of every hundred see it, must do so from quite beneath it, and have, consequently, as principal view, the entire under-part of the horse!

Now, Sir, I ask, ought any committee to be permitted to force such a sight thus prominently, mainly, on public observation?—to say nothing of the disgust increasing in proceeding to pass through the arch, when that portion remains the only ostensible part in sight, except the sole of his Grace's boot,—another proof of the reflective judgment of the committee, in placing the statue on a passage archway, the road all must pass to the royal palace; and the public, in the common ingress and egress through the great western entrance to the metropolis, from their peculiar necessary position as beholders, have not any possibility of escape. Sir, I am not a fastidious nor a squeamish person, and there are many, aye, very many, who feel with me, that the public should be protected by the proper authorities, against having thrust into general notice any view which propriety, so far from seeking, would desire to avoid.

AN INHABITANT OF MAY FAIR.

Sir,—I am induced to send you a few lines in gratitude for your unceasing exertions to promote a right feeling on the subject of the great Wellington statue.

In common with others, I imagined from the "shock" the public experienced when the profile of the figure was set up over the arch, that the matter was settled, so incongruous did the whole thing appear; and now that the Duke of Rutland has insisted, in spite of the opinions then expressed, to hoist the bronze in its place, what does the *tout-ensemble* present, but a gigantic model of a French toy—a colossal pendule: fill in the arch with a dial-plate, and let the pendulum vibrate beneath, and you have it complete—but how ridiculous!

A difficulty is said to exist, as to the provision of a suitable site for so magnificent a design; and certainly we have no street, or crescent, or piazza, at all commensurate with its proportions; it is quite certain that every building, public or private, would be destroyed by its proximity, while the figure itself would appear monstrous, from the impossibility of seeing it at a proper angle of vision, whether placed on a high or a low pedestal. But, Sir, colossal figures require a different treatment to those of life, or even heroic size. Did the Belgians squat their colossal lion on the ground of the field of Waterloo? No; they raised a lofty artificial mound of earth, on which it was placed, and thus produced a very fine monument. Again, the colossal figure of George the Third is well placed, and well seen at the extremity of the three-mile walk in Windsor Great Park. But it is said, we can produce nothing like those two instances in London. Yes, we can; there is a spot prepared by the hand of nature for the purpose, and a spot requiring the embellishment which such a majestic monument would confer—that spot is the summit of Primrose Hill. Monument and site so appropriate to each other, that the effect would rise to the sublime! Moreover, I would have a vault beneath the pedestal, consecrated, in which the remains of the hero would repose when his earthly career is ended.

A colossal groupe on the summit of this beautiful and remarkable hill would be visible from every part of the metropolis, from the shipping passing up and down the river, and to the passengers by the Great Northern and Western railways; it should be placed upon a pedestal from 20 to 25 feet high, according to the design, (I watched the hoisting of the statue, and I found the effect to be better at that height than at any other, either higher or lower); the pedestal should be designed by an architect; no sculptor can design a pedestal, as witness their abortive efforts all over the metropolis. It should be built of Irish limestone, from the quarries of Lord Montagu, or Lord Lansdown. It is one of the errors of the day to suppose that granite is durable in our climate; granite is not a homogenous mass, and therefore disintegrates; witness the state of Waterloo-bridge, and that of the public buildings in Dublin, in which city the granite wears away much faster than the Portland stone, often mixed with it in the same building. On each side of the pedestal should be a bronze